



NEWS RELEASE

COUNCIL PRESIDENT SCOTT PETERS

First District

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Council President Unveils 100-Day Plan for Reform

SAN DIEGO -- Council President Scott Peters today released his plan for the first 100 days of governmental and financial reform, in advance of a special City Council meeting to consider Mayor Jerry Sanders' 121 reform recommendations. Mayor Sanders joined Council President Peters for the announcement.

“Today the San Diego City Council will begin the consideration of a series of financial and systemic reforms. This is an historic moment in our civic life, as it gives us the opportunity to create a set of “best practices” that can serve as a model to cities across the nation. I want to thank Mayor Jerry Sanders and his staff for so quickly offering a set of proposals that will guide the Council in its conversations.

I also want to be clear about the role of this City Council. We will evaluate all 121 of the mayor's recommendations and decide how best to implement them in a way that promotes efficiency, control and taxpayer protections. Each will receive scrutiny over time from the Council and the public, and none will be finally adopted today. I welcome all ideas and all input as part of this process.

This morning I am announcing my plan for the first 100 days of reform. Reforming our city's financial systems is our first and highest priority. While all city business is important, and all city business will go forward, the financial reforms before us must take precedence. I will schedule a series of special Council meetings on Monday mornings, October 16, November 13 and December 4, to solicit public input and evaluate key components of the mayor's plan.

The discussion of reforms may also take place during regular committee and council meetings – but the special meetings give us and the public a dedicated time each month to focus on financial issues at the full City Council. We hope that we can act on all 121 recommendations by the end of the year.

We will also consider the provision of financial training for City Councilmembers and staff. In order to carry out our oversight duties effectively, councilmembers must receive professional training in finance and disclosure. We cannot expect the neighbors, teachers and preachers who sit on the City Council to be municipal finance experts. I will work with the Independent Budget Analyst, Mayor, CFO, Auditor and City Attorney to establish a professional training program for councilmembers and their staff, as needed, who work on financial and disclosure matters. I would like to start this training by January, to coincide with the release of the City's audits.

I hope that the civic conversation we begin today will demonstrate to the city's auditors and the SEC that this Council is extremely serious about working with the Mayor to enact a set of reforms that serve the best interests of the City and its taxpayers.

No one in San Diego is more sensitized to the need for reform than this City Council. Much of what the Mayor proposes now builds on the reforms we began in 2004, including a reshaping of the pension board and the creation of the Disclosure Practices Working Group.

And we should not underestimate the fundamental reform that took effect this January with the transition to a mayor/council form of government. This gave the mayor the power to make sweeping management changes within the city government. And it gave the City Council for the first time its own professional financial advisor, the Independent Budget Analyst, who has raised a number of questions that will be addressed by the Council in the next 100 days. The separation of executive and legislative powers and the checks and balances we have enacted have themselves resulted in greater accountability and a more public and transparent discussion of city issues.

I look forward to a full and productive conversation at this afternoon's special meeting, and I invite all interested citizens to join us at our monthly public hearings.

Thank you."

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